Introduction

The Symposium on the Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice at the 1996 SVU World Congress in Brno saw its numbers swell considerably from the Prague meeting two years earlier. The contents of this volume reflects that growth. Of considerable interest to the reader will be the ever expanding fields within the Bohemian Reformation – heretofore unexplored – that have become the focus for the research of the symposium's participants. The result is an increasingly balanced picture of Utraquism – better contextualised in its fourteenth century roots and as a movement characterised by a lively vigour until its eradication after the defeat at Bilá Hora.

Jan Milíč and Matěj of Janov are without peer the inspirational forces behind the Bohemian Reformation. Milíč's "Jerusalem" captured the imagination of a generation of Czechs – both clergy and laity – and presented them with the experience of a renewed church that had both spiritual vigour and social relevance. Without the systematic theological work of Matěj of Janov, however, that "Jerusalem" experience would surely have died with its founder and the consequent dissolution of the foundation.

Matěj's massive *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti* served as a theological bulwark for the extraordinary frequent communion movement in Bohemia which itself ultimately issued in the restoration of the practices of the lay chalice and the communion of infants. Jana Nechutová did the scholarly world tremendous service when she published the final volume of Matěj's work – six hundred years after the author's death and after an interruption of almost seventy years since the last editors laid down their pens. Of particular importance in this last volume is Matěj's work on images which was later to prove to be formative as Utraquism sought a *via media* on this contentious issue in late mediæval piety.

The extent to which John Wyclif was the beacon of the Bohemian reformation has been of long standing debate. Opinions vary from those who, on one hand, hold Wyclif to be the sole luminary of the first reformation whose genius alone was to inspire and guide the reform movement in Bohemia to those scholars who, on the other hand, maintain that the essence of what was original in the movement was of Bohemian provenance and not dependent on Wyclifite inspiration. Vilém Herold makes an important contribution to this debate by demonstrating that things are not always as they seem. By comparing common themes between Wyclif and Milíč – where no possible literary dependence could exist – he raises interesting questions about whether communality in theme between Wyclif and Hus necessarily implies literary dependence.

Jan Hus stands at the centre of a movement that has come to bear his name although those who followed him never used that name of themselves. Unlike Christian, which was first used as a term of opprobrium and, later, came to be claimed by all those who were baptised and thus, themselves, became *christos* (anointed), Utraquists refused to be anything other than catholics whose practice of communion *sub utraque specie* made them Utraquists. Throughout the Utraquist period, Hussite remained a name of opprobrium and only after much time and, even then, only in some places lost its pejorative connotations. This is perhaps the appropriate context in which to raise the question of whether or not a return to the more descriptive and neutral terms Utraquist and Utraquism might not serve the scientific study of the movement well.

This question is put in context by František Holeček's report on an ecumenical Commission of the Czech Bishop's Conference on the life and work of Jan Hus. As Christianity approaches its third millennium, there is a growing consciousness in the minds of many Christians – and of Pope John Paul II in particular – that there are many deeds for which the church stands guilty and needs to make amends. The illegal trial and unjust death of Jan Hus at Constance is, without doubt, one of these deeds that cries out for vindication. In his life, Hus demonstrated qualities of transparent goodness and holiness that drew to him a large following who remained loyal even when abandoning him would have clearly been more opportune. It is the task of the Commission to look at Hus' life and work in context so that they may be re-evaluated without the partisan polemic that has characterised so much of the work on Hus over past centuries.

Ivana Dolejšová's study on the question of the nominalist-realist debate over the question of authority helps put one area in context. Here, Dolejšová is able to delineate the complexity of the question and the politics – both academic and international – that complicated the issue and made a disinterested evaluation of Hus's ecclesiology difficult both at Constance and for succeeding generations.

Helena Krmíčková's summary of her major study on the restoration of the lay chalice in Bohemia is an important contribution to the most visible feature of the Bohemian reformation – the lay chalice for all the baptised. In her careful analysis of texts, she makes it clear that Jakoubek of Stříbro is the instigator of the restored chalice for the laity. Her larger study will be basic reading for all those interested in the origins of Utraquism in Bohemia.

Krmíčková's review of the literature on the chalice makes it increasingly apparent that the practice of Utraquism needs to be kept in historical perspective. Too often, one has the impression that the lay chalice was the innovation of Jakoubek and some of his entourage – devoid of historical

precedent in the relatively recent practice of the church. While it is probably an anachronism to impute Utraquist ideas to the sacramental movement of the fourteenth century, it is somewhat myopic to lose sight of the fact that Utraquists were themselves acutely conscious of the antiquity of the practice and that it was one that characterised the life of the vast majority of the life of the church until their own day. Communion under both kinds – *separately* – was the magisterial teaching of the church (both east and west) until the end of the first millennium and the growing eastern practice of intinction was condemned by western synodical and papal decrees until the end of the twelfth century. This fact alone needs to be taken into account when assessing the place of Bohemian Utraquism in the life of the church and raises the question of the extent to which heresy is an appropriate term to be used of Utraquists who, themselves, were more faithful to this part of the church's magisterium than were those who condemned the practice and imputed heresy to its proponents.

The study of later Utraquism has received very short shrift at the hands of historians. Maligned in their own time both at home and abroad, later Utraquism has often been portrayed as a spent force, devoid of any creative originality or vibrant life. There has always been a willingness among the heirs of the Counter Reformation to find protestant "heresy" hidden behind every bush as well as a vaguely disguised chagrin among the heirs of the Second Reformation of the sixteenth century that Utraquism never fully embraced its theological insights and reforms.

Three papers in this collection address different aspects of the ecclesial life of later Utraquism. Thomas Fudge examines the life of the Lower Consistory over the sixty years after the execution of Jan Roháč, the last of the radicals of the first phase of Utraquism. Instead of finding a rapid descent into lassitude, it becomes clear that the central administration of Utraquism remained faithful to its basic principles. While much of the energies of the Consistory were consumed in polemics with both Rome and the nascent Jednota Bratrská, the Peace of Kutná Hora in 1485 created the context for a peaceful coexistence which was unheard of elsewhere in the Latin Church.

In examining a number of Utraquist liturgical texts, David Holeton is able to demonstrate that there was an evolution of sacramental thought and practice within the movement. While previous writers have often dismissed later Utraquism of either merely "aping Rome" or adopting the new practices of Lutheranism, an examination of the texts themselves that Utraquist practice was the clone of neither tradition and that there remained a lively and reflected creativeness behind the evolution of Utraquist liturgy.

Zdeněk David continues his seminal work on the widely neglected later years of Utraquism. In examining the controversy over the Bohemian

Confession of 1575, he is able to demonstrate a widening social cleavage within the pluralism of Bohemian religious confession and a surprising stamina within Utraquism to resist subservience both to the external power of the papacy as well as the more immediate pressures of an increasingly Lutheran aristocracy. The capacity of the Utraquist Consistory to maintain both its independence and widespread popular support is an important testimony to the vibrancy of Utraquism itself. This puts the lie to much of what had been written previously on this period.

Continuing the practice set in the first volume of this series, these essays draw together a wide range of scholarly exploration of the Bohemian Reformation. Most of the research within these covers treats areas unavailable to readers who do not have facility with the Czech language and much of it explores fields that are otherwise unexamined in modern scholarship. A careful reading of this material will reveal that the *terra incognita* remains immense.

Shortly after this collection appears, an even larger number of scholars will assemble for the next symposium on the Bohemian Reformation and Religious Practice. The papers offered will expand the field of study at both ends of the historical spectrum and will, in due time, appear as the third volume in this series.

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